



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New Regulations Will Guide the Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans of California Communities**

**SACRAMENTO** – The [Department of Water Resources](#) (DWR) today released [proposed regulations](#) that will guide local groundwater sustainability agency management and regulation of California’s groundwater basins as outlined in the historic [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\)](#) enacted by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 2014. Improving Sustainable Groundwater Management is also a key element of the [California Water Action Plan](#). These regulations will move California toward successful implementation of SGMA and more sustainable management of our groundwater resources.

Legislatively mandated to adopt the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Regulations by June 1, 2016, DWR today posted the GSP Regulations on its website in advance of presenting them to the [California Water Commission](#) at its May 18, 2016 meeting. The proposed regulations can be found here:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/index.cfm>.

From the outset, the SGMA was intended to recognize that groundwater is best managed on the local level and that each groundwater basin has unique characteristics and challenges. An inherently technical and complex task, managing groundwater requires regulations that can address the goal of sustainability across such a geologically and hydrologically diverse state as California.

These proposed regulations reflect DWR’s responsibility under SGMA. DWR must evaluate the development and implementation of GSPs, alternatives, and coordination agreements by local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies or Local Agencies. The regulations cover such provisions as technical and reporting standards, sustainable management criteria, monitoring, evaluation and assessment, and plan amendments.

The proposed GSP regulations are the result of extensive public engagement and reflect the wide variety of perspectives provided by numerous advisory groups and statewide stakeholders, the general public, the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Water Commission. Throughout 2015 and 2016, DWR regularly met

with more than a dozen SGMA [advisory groups](#), conducted public meetings and webinars across the state, published issue papers to educate the public on the issues, prompt public discussion and gather feedback.

Groundwater is vital to California and supplies over a third of the water Californians use, and as much as 60% or more in some areas during times of drought. SGMA requires local agencies to draft plans to bring groundwater aquifers into balanced levels of pumping and recharge (Water Code §10733.2) which will help prepare communities for a changing climate and future droughts. High and medium priority groundwater basins identified as critically over-drafted must be managed under GSPs, adjudications, or alternatives by January 31, 2020. All other high and medium priority basins must be managed under a GSP by January 31, 2022. DWR offers technical and financial assistance to help local agencies develop their plans.

In some parts of the San Joaquin Valley, groundwater levels are reaching record lows—up to 100 feet lower than previous records. In August 2015, the Department of Water Resources [released a new NASA report](#) showing land in the San Joaquin Valley sinking faster than ever before, nearly two inches per month in some locations. Continued extensive groundwater pumping puts nearby infrastructure at greater risk of costly damage.

For more information regarding California's groundwater please visit:  
<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/index.cfm>

*Every Californian should take steps to conserve water; find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com).*

